

The clear guitar work of Wayne Long's **Only a Glance** gave me visions. With every note he called out of string and wood, I saw soft rain on windows, country hills fading in the sunset, tree branches reaching for the light through the clouds. No matter how hard I tried to attach a more dramatic, human story to his tunes, each new chord called out another landscape.

Perhaps it's because, like the countryside it evokes, Long's music seems to have come into being without human effort. There are human hands shaping it, of course, skilled hands playing every note of "Brothers" and making a guitar whisper the spirit of "Jan's Song" in a shy voice. But Long is skilled enough that the tune rises beyond the player, turning into a smooth, unfolding experience that seems to create itself.

Because Long's performance flows so evenly, listening to the whole album at once can sometimes create a sense of monotony. Closer listening reveals that to be a false impression. Long's music may speak with the same voice, but it tells a different story with every track.

Long's versatility is perhaps best shown by his performance on the album's most familiar tracks, "The Water is Wide" and "Amazing Grace." "The Water is Wide" wanders along musical digressions and occasionally into a near counter rhythm that give it the feel of a human conversation, a spoken farewell told in the voice of a guitar. His "Amazing Grace" is a humbler, gentler experience than that found by most singers, a grace found every day with the sun instead of at once in a staggering burst.

It's a feeling that reflects the album as a whole. **Only a Glance** is a gentle thing, a casual instrumental of work easily overshadowed by flashier players and hook driven tunes. But it's also a thing of surprising beauty for anyone willing to create the time to listen.

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